

CHAPTER 4. VITAL RECORDS AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

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CHAPTER 4. VITAL RECORDS AND EMERGENCY OPERATIONS

4.1 OVERVIEW.

4.1.1 This chapter provides policy guidelines for the preservation of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) financial management records and reports which are vital for continued operations or essential for the protection of the rights and interests of employees, contractors, and others. It also references policy guidance for the Agency to ensure the performance of essential functions and preserve the continuity of NASA operations under emergency conditions.

4.2 POLICY.

4.2.1 Vital Records.

- A. All records vital to emergency operations should be maintained on a current basis at Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Regional Centers. Storage of vital financial management records will be limited to copies or reproductions generated from existing procedures. Therefore, Centers are not to develop records or systems for the sole purpose of vital record(s) storage.
- B. All rights and interests records should be maintained on a reasonably current basis at a designated safe haven site. A safe haven site includes another NASA office, Government installation, Emergency Operating Center, or an adequately protected site, i.e., fire-resistant vault.
- C. The vital records program will be effective if the data selected are current, complete, adequately protected, accessible, and immediately usable. The program should be simple, economical, and not threatened by budget or procedural difficulties. It should be reviewed at least once a year to obtain valuable information through tests under different simulated emergency conditions. Such tests are not conclusive, but nonetheless provide the best available means of ensuring program effectiveness.

4.2.2 Emergency Operations.

- A. The records storage program discussed above is applicable in situations where Centers' planning contemplates a safe haven site only for vital records. Where Centers' emergency plans contemplate staffs and actual operations at a safe haven site, consideration should also be given to the following items:
 - 1. Functions that financial management personnel will be expected to perform, i.e., voucher examination, accounting.
 - 2. Number of persons required and assigned to a site to perform such functions.

3. Availability of supplies and forms (standard, stock, and NASA) which will be required.
 4. Availability of office equipment such as personal computers, calculators, typewriters, desks, reproduction equipment, etc.
 5. Availability of an authorized certifying officer, cashier, and facilities for safeguarding cash.
 6. A contingency plan to provide for the continuity of data processing resources during adverse events which would prevent or reduce normal operations. Normal operations can be disrupted by natural causes, i.e., floods, earthquakes, storms, fires, or water damage; equipment failures; human errors, or deliberate adverse acts by one or more individuals. The contingency (backup and recovery) plan for each Center must consider the use, criticality, and sensitivity of the data processed. The plan should include sound documentation, alternate equipment, periodic evaluations, and be structured to incorporate procedures that provide the capability to respond to a variety of adverse events.
- B. Assumptions to Consider In Emergency Planning. During an emergency, some relaxation of legal and procedural requirements may occur. Planning of the Central agencies assumes, however, that current standards will continue to be required. Adequate preparation should, therefore, be provided for all contingencies.
- C. Coordination. Arrangements for storing vital records and developing emergency operating plans will be coordinated with each Center's Emergency Planning Coordinator, Records Management Officer, and Computer Security Official.

4.3 AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES.

- 4.3.1 NASA Policy Directive (NPD) 1040.4A, "NASA Continuity of Operations." This NASA Policy Directive addresses NASA's ability to maintain the operation of its critical mission essential functions or implement transfer of critical mission essential functions to alternate locations in the event of emergencies and disastrous events resulting in long-term disruptions of normal operations.
- 4.3.2 NASA Procedural Requirements (NPR) 1040.1, "NASA Continuity of Operations (COOP) Planning Procedural Requirements." This NASA Procedural Requirement provides NASA Management, Center Directors, Chief Information Officers, Program Managers, and network administrators with a step by step approach to preparing a Continuity of Operations Plan, which addresses long-term losses or disruptions of primary mission essential operations, support facilities, Information Technology systems, and other essential interdependencies.

- 4.3.3 NPD 1440.6, “NASA Records Management.” This NASA Policy Directive addresses the oversight and management of the records management functions including the vital records described below.
- 4.3.4 NPR 1441.1, “NASA Records Retention Schedules.” This NASA Procedural Requirement sets forth the retention periods for the Federal records of NASA.
- 4.3.5 NPD 8710.1, “NASA Emergency Preparedness Program.” This NASA Policy Directive addresses NASA’s baseline capability requirements for responding to emergencies.
- 4.3.6 NPR 8715.2, “NASA Emergency Preparedness Plan.” This NASA Procedural Requirement provides NASA Headquarters and NASA Centers, including Component Facilities, with requirements for developing emergency preparedness procedures and for effectively working with regional organizations of the Department of Homeland Security’s FEMA for response to national emergencies.
- 4.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.
- 4.4.1 Agency Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and Deputy CFO. The Agency CFO and Deputy CFO shall:
- A. Implement NASA records management functions within the Office of the Chief Financial Officer (OCFO) organizations by ensuring the designation of organizational Records Liaison Officers who will coordinate with Center Records Managers who will, in turn, coordinate with the Agency Records Officer as appropriate.
 - B. Ensure that the OCFO supports the NASA Emergency Preparedness Program.
- 4.4.2 Center CFOs, Deputy CFOs, and Headquarters Director of Operations. Each Financial Management Office is responsible for implementing and insuring compliance with requirements of the vital records program within the office's respective activities by identifying, selecting, and furnishing copies, reproductions or automated storage of vital records to the Center Records Management Officer for transfer to a storage site.
- 4.5 DEFINITIONS.
- 4.5.1 Vital Records. Records that are determined to be essential for maintaining the continuity of NASA operations during a national emergency are considered vital records. The vital records program includes two basic categories.
- A. Emergency Operating Records. This category consists of records outlining the essential functions of NASA for the duration of emergency conditions. Included are emergency plans and directive(s); orders of succession; delegations of authority; staffing assignments; selected

program records needed to continue the most critical agency operations; related policy or procedural records that assist staff in conducting operations under emergency conditions; and for resuming normal operations after an emergency. These records, in paper or microfiche form, should be utilized without reliance on mechanical equipment. Microfiche readers at FEMA Regional Centers are not considered mechanical because the readers are handheld battery operated equipment.

- B. Rights and Interests Records. This category is composed of records required for the preservation of the rights and interests of individual citizens and the Government. Included are financial interests, for example, payroll data and manual or automated listings of other claims of employees, contractors and vendors (accounts payable) etc.; legal proceedings; and proof of ownership records. Financial management rights and interests records may be in an automated format, on paper, or in microfiche form.